

The LLL SIG Newsletter

What is PEACE?

By Julia Harper

Julia Harper interviews PEACE founder Tadashi Ishida and PEACE member Masako Hara to find out what the NGO is all about.

JH: Please tell us what PEACE is all about.

TI PEACE stands for People's Educational And Cultural Exchange and it is a social educational organization that is trying to promote international understanding and peace by bringing people together to learn about each other's cultures. We do this by organizing intercultural workshops, events, and exchanges of various kinds.

JH: I know that the NGO was formed quite recently. When did you start your activities?

TI: We started last February, so we have been operating for nearly a year. At the moment, we have 15 members who are eager to use their English skills to teach non-Japanese people about Japanese culture.

JH: What sorts of activities do you sponsor?

TI: Well, to teach people from other countries about Japan we have activities such as sushi making, calligraphy, origami (paper folding), putting on kimono, English Rakugo, playing shamisen, and other cultural events. And we also have events where we ask people from other countries to explain about various aspects of their culture to small groups of interested people. Most of the events are held on Saturday, and we have at least four events a month. After each event, we send pictures of the event to participants by email.

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JH: How do you find participants for the events?

TI: We have made agreements with Waseda University and a number of hotels in Tokyo to advertise our activities. In fact, one of the reasons our group sought NGO status was to show that we were a serious group that could be trusted by hotels and universities in the city.

It is a win-win situation. Foreign visitors to Japan get a chance to experience Japanese culture (for free), the Japanese members of the NGO get a chance to practice English and exchange cultural information with a variety of people, and the hotels can advertise our group's activities as a way to attract foreign guests.

JH: What has been your most popular activity so far?

TI: We arranged for foreign students from Waseda University to carry a Mikoshi in the famous Sanja Festival held in Asakusa. That has definitely been our most popular activity to date.

JH: Where can those interested in your group get more information?

TI: Please feel free to email us at peace.peace2010@gmail.com.

JH: Now I would like to ask PEACE member Masako Hara about her experiences with the group.

Hara-san, could you please tell us something about PEACE?

MH: I have much more knowledge through the activities of PEACE and the cultural exchange excites me. Through PEACE, I got a friend from England. It is my treasure. We are keeping in touch through email.

JH: Thank you both very much for telling us about PEACE

TI/MH: Thank you.